



The E-Newsletter of the Senate Majority Caucus

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Senate Health Committee Vice-Chair Sen. Suzanne Chun-Oakland, Chair Sen. Rosalyn Baker, members Sen. Russell Kokobun and Sen. Shan Tsutsui at a hearing on a Majority Package "Ice" bill

Senator Gary L. Hooser Wins National Support for Advisory Council Measure

The Association of Governing Boards of Universities and Colleges has weighed in with its support of a measure sponsored by Senator Gary Hooser (D-Kaua'i, Ni'ihau). Sen. Hooser, Vice Chair of the Senate

Majority Package Bills Advance

The bills that make up the 2004 Democratic Majority Package have moved through the first round of committee hearings.

Education measures from both branches of the Legislature have passed out of their respective committees and moved on in the legislative process. The bills range from decentralization measures to measures meant to establish so-called "weighted student formulas" in the public schools. This is a funding allocation system that allocates revenue according to the specific needs of individual students. There are other measures that deal with teacher employment and mandatory professional development.

The ice measures are well on their way after making it through the last set of Committee on Health and Judiciary and Hawaiian Affairs Committee hearings. The bills make it clear that lawmakers are serious about designating specific

funds to help provide treatment for the people of Hawaii. They are also passing along measures that will allow for stiffer penalties for dealers and increased authority for drug courts and law enforcement.

A prescription drug measure is also advancing at the Legislature. The bill would help establish income limits and set eligibility requirements for the large "gap group" of people in Hawaii who lack the insurance or the private means to pay for prescribed medications.

A complete outline of the 2004 Joint House-Senate Majority Package is available at the Senate Majority Caucus website. The address is <http://www.capitol.hawaii.gov/senmaj/members/2004/bunda/senmaj-package-2004-1.htm>.

Majority Caucus website:
www.capitol.hawaii.gov/senmaj/



Senator Gary L. Hooser

Education Committee, is calling for University of Hawaii Regent nominees to be chosen by a Candidate Advisory Council, with the final appointment being made by the Governor. The Council would include four members appointed by the President of the Senate, four appointed by the Speaker of the House of Representatives, and four members appointed by the Governor. The Executive Director wrote Sen. Hooser to say, "Your efforts are to be commended and supported. [The Association] has advocated this approach for nearly two decades."



Senator Melodie Aduja (D-Kaneohe, Kahuku) with coaches and captains of the Kahuku High School State Championship team. From left to right: Paea Vaimoui, Co-Captain, Walker Vave, Co-Captain, Joe Whitford, Kahuku Athletic Director, Siuaki Livai, Kahuku Red Raiders Coach. In a speech on the Senate floor, Sen. Aduja said "It is through the individual efforts of each member that the team succeeds, and it is through the unity of the team that each individual can thrive and grow." The Kahuku Red Raiders posted a 14-0 regular season record and defeated St. Louis 27-26 in the Hawaii High Athletic Association Division I championship game.

Media Watch

Local School Boards Proposal, Supporting Evidence Questioned

With a front-page story and a follow-up editorial, the Honolulu Star-Bulletin is questioning Governor Lingle's proposal to dismantle the State Board of Education and establish seven or more locally elected school boards. An article by Susan Essoyan headlined "Research fails to support gov on school boards" says "Educational researchers... say there is little evidence that altering district size will raise student achievement." The article also points out discrepancies in the evidence offered to support her plan. "In her testimony, Lingle painted a different picture of the research on district size and test scores. 'The positive impact of school district size has been examined extensively,' she told legislators. 'Studies of 37 states plus the District of Columbia have all reached the same conclusion. There is a direct connection between smaller school districts and higher student achievement.' Asked later by the Star-Bulletin to identify those studies, Lingle said she was in fact referring to just 'one study of 37 different states.'" The actual study, published in 1994, did not take into account the previous educational level or the socioeconomic status of the states being considered.



"Challenger" has flown over the field at World Series games and other sporting events across the nation. The Bald Eagle was threatened with extinction thirty years ago, but its numbers have been steadily growing.

Few who saw it will be able to forget the sight of a majestic American Bald Eagle flying over the Senate Chamber in one of the opening days of the 2004 session.. "Challenger" is an eagle who was raised by a family that rescued him from a storm when he was a baby. He has spent his life among humans, and is considered "non-releasable" into the wild. He and his handlers travel the country for ceremonial appearances; this was his first visit to Hawaii.

Web Links:

Hawaii State Legislature:

www.capitol.hawaii.gov/

Senate Majority:

www.capitol.hawaii.gov/senmaj/

In an editorial published the following day, the Star-Bulletin said, "Governor Lingle has not yet connected the dots. This complex and consequential undertaking demands that the governor present accurately data that supports her assertions."

It went on to say, "More significant elements of improvement are good curriculum, smaller schools, smaller class size, qualified teachers and parental involvement... Further, the political debate about school districts and multiple boards should take a back seat to making changes that we know directly affect student performance."

In a Feb. 22 editorial, the Honolulu Advertiser said local school boards were an idea with "so little data to back it up that those who have studied it with an open mind over time have become disenchanted."

Call to Order is a bi-weekly publication of the Hawaii Senate Majority Caucus.
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